IN THE CLAIMS:

1.   (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for product selection assistance, said method comprising:

receiving a product category selection;

processing the received product category selection using the computer by matching the product category selection against a product database to determine a plurality of matched products;

displaying a product matrix comprising a product entry for each of the matched products, each product entry defining a row of the product matrix and comprising a model identifier and at least one product configuration parameter associated with the matched products; products such that the product matrix includes a product parameter column for each of the at least one product configuration parameters;

presenting a product configuration question relating to the at least one product configuration parameter displayed in the product matrix, wherein said presenting the product configuration question comprises presenting the product configuration question associated with a selected product configuration parameter chosen from the at least one product configuration parameter;

receiving a product configuration answer;

processing the product configuration answer using the computer by responsively updating the product matrix based on the product configuration answer to eliminate at least one product entry in the product matrix, wherein said processing the product configuration answer by responsively updating comprises removing the selected product configuration parameter from the product matrix and displacing the selected product configuration parameter and the product configuration answer to a visible location outside the product matrix;

modifying the product matrix by inserting another product parameter that defines a corresponding product parameter column to replace the selected product configuration parameter and corresponding column without changing a total number of parameter columns; and

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displaying the updated product matrix, the previous product configuration question, and a new product configuration question in a same display page.

2.   (canceled)

3.   (canceled)

4.   (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein each product entry further comprises a comparison toggle button with a selected state and an unselected state, and further comprising the steps of displaying a Compare button and, when the Compare button is activated, responsively displaying a side by side comparison only of matched products with the comparison toggle button in the selected state.

5.   (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of receiving a product category selection further comprises receiving a product color.

6.   (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the model identifier is formatted as a hyperlink to a product information page associated with the model identifier.

7.   (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of displaying a product matrix further comprises displaying column headings in the product matrix including a model number heading, a model price heading, and a product configuration heading for each of the at least one product configuration parameter.

8.   (original) A method according to claim 7, further comprising the steps of determining a selected column heading based on an external input and sorting the product matrix based on the selected heading.

9.   (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter includes a plurality of product configuration parameters, and at least one of the product configuration parameters is formatted as a hyperlink to a product configuration information page associated with the model identifier.

10.   (canceled)

11.   (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of, after receiving the product category selection, presenting an initial filtering question and receiving an associated initial filtering answer, and wherein the step of processing the

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received product category selection using the computer by matching comprises matching the product category selection and a query criteria based on the initial filtering answer against the product database to determine the plurality of matched products.

12.   (previously presented)   A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of displaying a product matrix further comprises displaying the at least one product entry sorted by brand name.

13.   (previously presented)   A method according to claim 1, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter is a consumer critical-to-quality parameter for the matched products.

14.   (currently amended)   A product selection assistance tool comprising:

a communication interface;

a processing circuit coupled to the communication interface; and

a memory coupled to the processing circuit, the memory storing, for execution by the processing circuit, instructions for:

receiving a product category selection over the communication interface;

matching the product category selection against a product database to determine a plurality of matched products;

displaying a product matrix comprising a product entry for each of the matched products, each product entry defining a row of the product matrix and comprising a model identifier and at least one product configuration parameter associated with the matched products; products such that the product matrix includes a product parameter column for each of the at least one product configuration parameters;

presenting a product configuration question related to the at least one product configuration parameter displayed in the product matrix;

receiving a product configuration answer;

responsively updating the product matrix based on the product configuration answer to eliminate at least one product entry in the product matrix, the product configuration

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question based on a selected product configuration parameter chosen from the at least one product configuration parameter, wherein the instructions for responsively updating include instructions to remove the selected product configuration parameter from the product matrix and instructions for displacing the selected product configuration parameter and the product configuration answer to a visible location outside the product matrix;

modifying the product matrix by inserting another product parameter that defines a corresponding product parameter column to replace the selected product configuration parameter and corresponding column without changing a total number of parameter columns; and

displaying the updated product matrix, the previous product configuration question, and a new product configuration question in a same display page.

15. (canceled)

16. (canceled)

17. (previously presented) A product selection assistance tool according to claim 14, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter includes product configuration parameters and at least one of the product configuration parameters is a hyperlink to a product configuration information page associated with the model identifier.

18. (previously presented) A product selection assistance tool according to claim 14, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter is a consumer critical-to-quality parameter for the matched products.

19. (currently amended) A computer comprising:

a processing circuit; and

a memory coupled to said processing circuit, wherein said memory stores, for execution by said processing circuit, instructions for:

displaying, on at least one of said computer and another computer connected to said computer over a network, a matrix panel comprising a product matrix displaying a plurality of products using individual product entries defining a row of the product matrix and comprising a model identifier and at least one product configuration parameter associated

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with the ~~products;~~ products such that the product matrix includes a product parameter column for each of the at least one product configuration parameters;

displaying, on at least one of said computer and the other computer, a product configuration panel displaying a product configuration question and accepting a product configuration answer, the product matrix responsively updating based on the product configuration answer to eliminate at least one product entry in the product matrix, wherein the product configuration question relates to the at least one product configuration parameter displayed in the product matrix, the product configuration question based on a selected product configuration parameter chosen from the at least one product configuration parameter, and wherein the product matrix is responsively updated by removing the selected product configuration parameter from the product matrix and by displacing the selected product configuration parameter and the product configuration answer to a visible location outside the product matrix;

modifying the product matrix by inserting another product parameter that defines a corresponding product parameter column to replace the selected product configuration parameter and corresponding column without changing a total number of parameter columns; and

displaying, on at least one of said computer and the other computer, the updated product matrix, the previous product configuration question, and a new product configuration question in a same display page.

20.   (previously presented)   A computer according to claim 19, wherein the product matrix further comprises column headings including a model number heading, a model price heading, and a product configuration heading for the at least one product configuration parameter.

21.   (previously presented)   A computer according to claim 19, wherein the product matrix displays the at least one product entry sorted according to a selected column heading.

22.   (previously presented) A computer according to claim 19, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter includes product configuration parameters and at least

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one of the product configuration parameters is a hyperlink to a product configuration information page associated with the model identifier.

23.   (previously presented)   A computer according to claim 19, wherein the product configuration panel further displays outside the product matrix each product configuration answer.

24.   (previously presented)   A computer according to claim 19, wherein each product entry includes a comparison toggle button with an ON state and an OFF state.

25.   (currently amended) A computer program product comprising:

a storage medium readable by a processing circuit and storing for execution by the processing circuit:

instructions for receiving a product category selection;

instructions for matching the product category selection against a product database to determine a plurality of matched products;

instructions for displaying a product matrix comprising a product entry for each of the matched products, each product entry defining a row of the product matrix and comprising a model identifier and at least one product configuration parameter associated with the matched products; products such that the product matrix includes a product parameter column for each of the at least one product configuration parameters;

instructions for presenting a product configuration question related to the at least one product configuration parameter displayed in the product matrix, wherein said instructions for presenting include instructions configured to present the product configuration question associated with a selected product configuration parameter chosen from the at least one product configuration parameter;

instructions for receiving a product configuration answer;

instructions for responsively updating the product matrix based on the product configuration answer to eliminate at least one product entry in the product matrix, wherein the instructions for responsively updating include instructions configured to remove the selected product configuration parameter from the product matrix and instructions configured

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to displace the selected product configuration parameter and the product configuration answer to a visible location outside the product matrix;

instructions for modifying the product matrix by inserting another product parameter that defines a corresponding product parameter column to replace the selected product configuration parameter and corresponding column without changing a total number of parameter columns; and

instructions for displaying the updated product matrix, the previous product configuration question, and a new product configuration question in a same display page.

26.   (original) The computer program product of claim 25, wherein the storage medium is one of a floppy disk, hard disk, ROM, or RAM.

27.   (canceled)

28.   (canceled)

29.   (original) The computer program product of claim 25, wherein each product entry further comprises a comparison toggle button with a selected state and an unselected state, and further instructions for displaying a Compare button and, when the Compare button is activated, responsively displaying a side by side comparison only of matched products having the comparison toggle button in the selected state.

30.   (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein each of the product configuration question and the product configuration answer include information regarding at least one of a refrigerator, a washer, a dryer, and an air conditioner.

31.   (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter includes at least one of a capacity of a refrigerator, a type of dispenser included with the refrigerator, and inclusion of an icemaker with the refrigerator.

32.   (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter includes at least one of a capacity of a washer, a number of wash cycles executed by the washer, and a number of combinations of wash temperatures and rinses executed by the washer.

33.   (previously presented)   A method according to Claim 1, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter includes at least one of an amount of cooling provided by an air conditioner, an operating voltage of the air conditioner, and an energy efficiency ratio of the air conditioner.

34.   (previously presented)   The product selection assistance tool of Claim 14, wherein each of the product configuration question and the product configuration answer include information regarding at least one of a refrigerator, a washer, a dryer, and an air conditioner.

35.   (previously presented)   The product selection assistance tool of Claim 14, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter includes at least one of a capacity of a refrigerator, a type of dispenser included with the refrigerator, and inclusion of an icemaker with the refrigerator.

36.   (previously presented)   The product selection assistance tool of Claim 14, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter includes at least one of a capacity of a washer, a number of wash cycles executed by the washer, and a number of combinations of wash temperatures and rinses executed by the washer.

37.   (previously presented)   The product selection assistance tool of Claim 14, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter includes at least one of an amount of cooling provided by an air conditioner, an operating voltage of the air conditioner, and an energy efficiency ratio of the air conditioner.

38.   (previously presented)   A computer according to Claim 19, wherein each of the product configuration question and the product configuration answer include information regarding at least one of a refrigerator, a washer, a dryer, and an air conditioner.

39.   (previously presented)   A computer according to Claim 19, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter includes at least one of a capacity of a refrigerator, a type of dispenser included with the refrigerator, and inclusion of an icemaker with the refrigerator.

40.   (previously presented)   A computer according to Claim 19, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter includes at least one of a capacity of a washer, a

number of wash cycles executed by the washer, and a number of combinations of wash temperatures and rinses executed by the washer.

41.   (previously presented) A computer according to Claim 19, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter includes at least one of an amount of cooling provided by an air conditioner, an operating voltage of the air conditioner, and an energy efficiency ratio of the air conditioner.

42.   (previously presented) The computer program product of Claim 25, wherein each of the product configuration question and the product configuration answer include information regarding at least one of a refrigerator, a washer, a dryer, and an air conditioner.

43.   (previously presented) The computer program product of Claim 25, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter includes at least one of a capacity of a refrigerator, a type of dispenser included with the refrigerator, and inclusion of an icemaker with the refrigerator.

44.   (previously presented) The computer program product of Claim 25, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter includes at least one of a capacity of a washer, a number of wash cycles executed by the washer, and a number of combinations of wash temperatures and rinses executed by the washer.

45.   (previously presented) The computer program product of Claim 25, wherein the at least one product configuration parameter includes at least one of an amount of cooling provided by the air conditioner, an operating voltage of an air conditioner, and an energy efficiency ratio of the air conditioner.